



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

****GUEST EDITORIAL FOR LIBRARY WEEK****

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Libraries support our culture and quality of life

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

The annual observance of National Library Week, April 2-8, is a time when we reflect on the important contribution libraries make to our culture and quality of life.

Wisconsin residents are active users of their libraries. In a year's time, state citizens made nearly 32 million visits to their local public libraries and borrowed 56.8 million library items. School libraries, academic libraries, medical libraries, and other types of libraries also are heavily used. From books and videos on learning a new skill to mysteries, music, and children's items, our libraries have a wide range of resources to serve citizens' needs.

Everyday, our libraries connect students, families, seniors, civic officials, and educators statewide with the information they desire and the instruction they need to be successful in our ever-changing global society. Job seekers, business people, and investors have reported that they consider public libraries to be a primary resource for obtaining the information they need. Whether using the library to read for pleasure, for school work, or in pursuit of a new career, libraries are places of opportunity and education.

Libraries are a government service and quality-of-life resource for all children and adults. Just as a free public education is an integral part of our democratic society, so is access to information through Wisconsin's school, public, business, and government libraries. Our state's interlibrary loan program and on-line library—BadgerLink—facilitate resource sharing, bringing vast informational resources to all parts of the state.

Libraries are part of our educational goal for Wisconsin: to ensure a quality education for every child and the opportunity for lifelong learning for every individual. Libraries narrow the digital divide by

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providing free Internet access. They stimulate the economy by supporting job seekers, businesses, and investors. And by supporting intellectual freedom, they ensure that the marketplace of ideas keeps our democracy strong.

This year's National Library Week theme is "Change Your World @ Your Library." During library week and throughout the year, I encourage you to visit a library and see all that it has to offer.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTE: To download a high resolution photo of the state superintendent, visit the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >.

NOTE: BadgerLink is supported by the Department of Public Instruction to provide Wisconsin residents access to quality online information in cooperation with the state's library community. BadgerLink is available at < <http://www.badgerlink.net> >.